

November 24, 2015

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### Dear Working Group Member,

In this update, we are excited to share our Thanksgiving-themed social media campaign (which we hope you will take part in!), media coverage of two recent laws that will permit pharmacy access to hormonal contraceptives in California and Oregon, an overview of our annual Working Group meeting that was held in October, and an article in the latest *Guttmacher Policy Review* about OTC OCs being part of a broader strategy to enhance contraceptive access.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan".

Daniel Grossman, MD  
Senior Advisor, Ibis Reproductive Health and Professor in the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences at the University of California, San Francisco

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Britt Wahlin".

Britt Wahlin,  
Vice President for Development and Public Affairs  
Ibis Reproductive Health

## Thanksgiving campaign

As we approach the Thanksgiving holiday in the US, we give thanks for the wide variety of contraceptive options available--and renew our commitment to having an over-the-counter birth control pill be one of them. We hope you will join us in sharing this message in your social media networks with our new image from [Free the Pill](#), available in English and Spanish.

Here are the links on Facebook in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Here are the links on Twitter in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).



We're thankful for a wide variety of birth control options – and an OTC pill should be one of them.

#Free the Pill

## CA and OR pharmacy access

Two new laws in California and Oregon will let pharmacists prescribe hormonal contraceptives, expanding access for millions of women. In both states under the new legislation, pharmacists will screen women using a brief medical history questionnaire, and the contraceptives will be covered by insurance. California's law has no age restriction, but the Oregon law will require people under 18 to first obtain a prescription from a doctor.

"There's a growing body of evidence that there isn't a safety concern. There are studies showing that women can really accurately identify the conditions that make it appropriate to use certain contraceptives, using a simple checklist," said Dan Grossman in a *New York Times* article covering the two bills. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists President

Dr. Mark DeFrancesco says these bills do not go far enough. As he told the *New York Times*, "there should be nobody between the patient and the pill." He went on to state, "I'm afraid we're going to create a new model that becomes a barrier between that and over the counter. I worry that it's going to derail the over-the-counter movement."

You can read more coverage of these bills here:

*New York Times*: <http://nyti.ms/1Lxznq3>

*Time*: <http://ti.me/1R12s4s>

*Seattle Times*: <http://bit.ly/1XcbGQo>

*Teen Vogue*: <http://bit.ly/1ShR3vs>

*MTV*: <http://on.mtv.com/1MA6vBI>

*Jezebel*: <http://bit.ly/1Oqb55T>

*Refinery 29*: <http://r29.co/1IdNsJm>

## OCs OTC Working Group meeting

Our annual OCs OTC working group meeting took place on October 20, 2015, in Washington, DC, with approximately 70 participants in attendance. Topics covered during the meeting included an update on where we are and the developments over the past year, a recap from a meeting held with reproductive justice advocates in May, cost and insurance coverage of a future OTC OC, politics and OCs OTC, adolescent OTC OC access, communicating key messages about OCs OTC, other strategies to improve access to hormonal contraception, and next steps. You can find the meeting agenda [here](#). If you would like more information about the meeting, please let [Emily](#) know.

## Featured publication

A new analysis published in the *Guttmacher Policy Review* by Sneha Barot, from the Guttmacher Institute, explores the robust evidence in support of making the pill available without a prescription, and the politicization of the issue in recent legislation introduced in US Congress. Barot argues for the importance of an OTC pill being part of, and not a replacement for, a broader strategy for contraceptive access, and that policymakers should demonstrate their commitment to advancing reproductive health by also strengthening access to and coverage of the full range of contraceptive methods, services, and care.

You can read the full article [here](#).

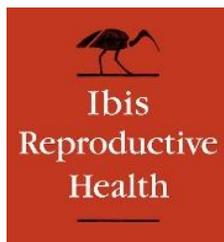
Barot S. Moving oral contraceptives to over-the-counter status: Policy versus politics. *Guttmacher Policy Review* 2015; 18(4): 85-91.

## About us

The Oral Contraceptives (OCs) Over-the-Counter (OTC) Working Group is a coalition of reproductive health, rights, and justice organizations, nonprofit research and advocacy groups, university-based researchers, and prominent clinicians who share a commitment to providing all women of reproductive age easier access to safe, effective, acceptable, and affordable contraceptives. The working group was established in 2004 to explore the potential of over-

the-counter access to oral contraceptives to reduce disparities in reproductive health care access and outcomes, and to increase opportunities for women to access a safe, effective method of contraception, free of unnecessary control, as part of a healthy sexual and reproductive life.

The working group is coordinated by Ibis Reproductive Health.



[www.ibisreproductivehealth.org](http://www.ibisreproductivehealth.org)

## Contact us

**For questions or inquiries, please contact us at:**

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